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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3476  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 6803  
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT 4528  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 3151  
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7672  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1748  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5083  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1289  
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
INFO RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 7414

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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND  
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND  
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON  
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC  
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: OIC Conference, Palestinian Territories, Lebanon, Cheney,  
Iraq (5/16)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on May 16 reported Foreign Minister Mouallem's speech at the meeting of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Islamabad on May 15. Mouallem said that the only way to end violence and realize peace in the Middle East is by Israel's recognition of relevant international resolutions, which guarantee a comprehensive settlement that ends occupation of Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan. He noted the negative repercussions of continued Israeli occupation of Arab territories and its racial campaigns against holy symbols, including the excavations around the al-Aqsa Mosque. On Iraq, he referred to the waves of terrorism and bloodshed of innocents there, confirming that Syria supports the current political process. He encouraged the Iraqi government to take necessary steps to achieve national reconciliation. He reiterated the importance of establishing a national army in Iraq, withdrawing foreign troops, and preserving Iraq territorial integrity and Islamic and Arab identity.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Musharaf inaugurates the Organization of Islamic Conference in Islamabad. Mouallem: Peace can be achieved by making Israel abide by international resolutions" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/16)

"Gaza is a closed city. 11 Palestinians killed in clashes between Hamas and security elements of the Palestinian Presidency. Olmert confers with Jordanian Monarch: We are ready to meet moderate Arabs without preconditions" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 5/16)

"Welch in Beirut to discuss the International Tribunal. Welch meets the governing majority in the US Embassy in Beirut" (Independent al-Watan, 5/16)

"Killing and injury of 3 US soldiers in Baghdad and al-Anbar. Scores of Iraqis killed in various explosions in Iraq. Democrats replace draft resolution on financing war on Iraq with another draft resolution avoiding presidential veto" (Government-owned Tishreen, 5/16)

"US troops detain Iraqis in search for missing US soldiers"

(Government-owned Syria Times)

### 13. Editorial Block Quotes:

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"In the Right Direction"  
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Ali Nasrallah, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (5/15): "The campaign by Iraqi parliamentarians for a timetable for American withdrawal from Iraq is a real step in the right direction, though late.... 144 Iraqi members of parliament have signed a petition calling for American withdrawal.... This indicates that more than 50 percent of the Iraqi people reject the occupation and call for its removal, something that the Iraqi government and the international community cannot ignore...."

"The parliamentarians' step needs to be taken seriously.... Their colleagues who have not signed the petition must do the same thing because this would end the cycle of violence and terrorism in Iraq...."

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"Effective Palestinian Move to Confront  
Israeli Deception"  
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Ibrahim Shugayr, a commentator in government-owned Al-Ba'th, wrote (5/16): "There must be effective Palestinian political action to confront the American-Israeli attempts to obliterate and circumvent final solution issues through the talk

about security arrangements and the reduction of the Palestinian question to a number of roadblocks here and there....

"This Palestinian action must also encourage Arab countries to lift the siege on Palestinians and to reject any compromise with regard to the Arab peace plan....

"Full Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, assertion of the right of return, and establishment of a Palestinian state constitute one package that Israel must either accept or reject in full...."

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"Does Cheney's Tour Mean Loss of Confidence in Rice?"  
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Khurshid Dalli, a commentator in independent Al-Watan, wrote (5/16): "US Vice President Dick Cheney's tour of the region followed shortly after Condoleezza Rice's visit. Does this indicate that the US Administration has lost confidence in the ability of the Secretary of State to promote US plans? If this is the case, it

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means that the crisis has reached the head of the US Administration and its neoconservatives....

"Cheney began his tour with a visit to Iraq.... Does this mean that it has to do with the fate of Al-Maliki's government in light of the failure of the Baghdad security plan and the fact that a number of countries in the region are not happy with Al-Maliki's performance...?"

"Cheney's tour shows a crisis of a US Administration that has begun to sense a real failure in Iraq and to miss the appropriate opportunities for dealing with the issues of the region...."

Corbin